



Credit for Prior Learning



Credit by Examination (CBE)

- **What is Credit by Exam (CBE)?** A student with skills and knowledge gained outside of a traditional classroom setting may demonstrate their prior learning by successfully completing a comprehensive examination for a course in the college catalog. A student may challenge a course in which evidence of competence can be presented.
- Credit may be earned through CBE provided that the examination has been approved or prepared, administered and graded by faculty and other designated authorities of Cañada College, College of San Mateo, and Skyline College.
- Credit may only be awarded if the student is currently enrolled in San Mateo Community College District, in good academic standing, and the course is listed in the most current Cañada College, College of San Mateo, or Skyline College catalog.
- A student may attempt credit by exam for a course only one time.
 - **Important:** Admissions & Records processes the CBE petition and annotates the grade result on a student's official record at the end of the semester. A student may choose to decline the exam grade, or if they wish to appeal the grade, they must do so through the Grade Grievance Process (see CBE Procedures).
- Credit will not be awarded for a course for which credit has been previously granted or for which credit has been earned in a more advanced course in the same sequence (sequence example: MATH 251, 252, 253).
- Laboratory-based science courses, 800 level support courses, independent study and special topics courses are not eligible for credit by exam.
- A maximum of 12 units towards an associate degree or 6 units towards a certificate may be applied through CBE. Credits earned by examination cannot be used to satisfy the 12-unit residency requirement for an associate degree or certificate.
- CBE units cannot be used for purposes of financial aid eligibility, VA educational benefits, enrollment status, or to improve a grade already received for a course.
- Students with disabilities, who may need academic accommodations, are encouraged to discuss their authorized accommodations with the CBE Instructor; these are listed on an official Academic Accommodation Letter provided to the student from the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Students should provide timely notice of the authorized accommodation(s) to the CBE Instructor to allow sufficient time for the accommodation(s) to be implemented. The faculty will work with the DRC Office to ensure that proper accommodation is provided. Students may apply for DRC services by completing the DRC Application for Services.
- Each transfer institution determines if or how CBE results are applied. Consult with a counselor for details.

CBE Timeline	CBE Timeline Example	
Deadlines	Fall 2025	Spring 2026

CBE Exam Period: Weeks 1 – 14 (no exams after Week 14)	8/13/2025 – 11/14/2025	1/12/2026 - 4/17/2026
Decline or Appeal a Grade: No later than two weeks before the end of the term.	11/26/2025	5/9/2026

No Summer CBE.

Credit by Exam Procedure

- **DEADLINES:** The CBE process can take upwards of six weeks to complete; we will do our best to process petitions in a timely manner, but delays could occur during peak periods of the semester. For a grade to be posted in the term the exam was administered, the completed petition must be submitted to the Admissions & Records Office (A&R) **no later than two weeks before the end of the term.**
- In consultation with Discipline Faculty, the CPL designated Counselor will help determine if Credit by Exam is available and the best method of completing the requested course requirement, based on the student's educational goals.
 - If the student decides they will move forward with the exam, they complete the CBE petition and submit it to Admissions & Records (A&R).
- The A&R office will verify within 10 business days that the student meets the eligibility requirements outlined in **PART A** of the petition. If approved, the petition will be forwarded to the Instructional Dean.
- The Instructional Dean will contact the Discipline Faculty for the course and coordinate with them to facilitate administering the exam. There are two types of exams used for CBE, Quantitative Exams and Practical Exams, a course may require one or both types of exams to assess a student's mastery of the course objectives. Students will be contacted by the Dean's office to schedule a time and location for the exam.
- After the student has completed the exam, within 7 business days, Discipline Faculty will assign a grade in **PART B** of the petition and email the completed petition to the Student and Counselor, Admissions & Records, and Instructional Dean.
- After receiving the grade on the petition, the student must take one of the following actions:
 - **ACCEPT the exam grade:** If a student is satisfied with the grade, no further action is required. The student will be notified when the grade is applied to their academic record.

When they receive the completed petition, Admissions & Records will automatically apply an exam grade of 70% (C grade) or better to the students' academic record at the end of the term. The student's record will be annotated in the semester the exam was taken to reflect that credit was earned using Credit by Exam (CBE). Grades lower than 70% will not be recorded on the students' record; however, the completed petition will be retained in their file in A&R, and the student must take the class. It is the student's responsibility to reach out to the Dean if they do not receive the exam grade. CBE for the same course may not be attempted again.

- **DECLINE the exam grade:** To decline the exam grade, the student completes STEP 3 of the petition and submits it to A&R no later than two weeks before the end of the term (fall/spring).

The student must communicate to A&R their wish to "decline" the exam grade in STEP 3 of the petition, confirming they do not want the grade applied to their student record, and that they will take the course. The grade will not be recorded on the student's record; however, the completed petition will be retained in their file in A&R. CBE for the same course may not be attempted again. Note: If a student declines the exam grade, subsequently takes the course and receives a lesser grade than the CBE grade, they are not permitted to go back and appeal to have the exam grade applied.

- **Grade Appeal** – If a student wishes to appeal the exam grade, they complete STEP 3 of the petition and submit it to A&R **no later than two weeks before the end of the term** (fall/spring).
 - The exam grade assigned on the petition will be applied to the student's academic record at the end of the term; the student will be notified when the grade is applied.
 - Students wishing to appeal a grade received through Credit by Exam, must immediately contact the Division Dean where the course resides, and follow the *Grade Grievance Process* as outlined in the campus catalog.
 - When A&R is notified of a grade grievance, a satisfactory grade from the CBE petition will still be applied to the course on the student's academic record at the end of term, and the completed CBE petition will be retained in the student's file.
 - The student will engage in the local Grade Grievance Process. Before the end of the process, the student may still choose to *accept or decline* the original grade.
 - At the conclusion of the Grade Grievance Process, if it is determined the grade should change, the Discipline Faculty or Instructional Dean must submit a *Change of Final Grade form* to A&R (if required).
 - There is a deadline of one (1) year from the date that the grade is posted for a student to initiate a grade change.

- Note: If the credit by examination was applied toward a degree or certificate award or transfer, the appeal will be denied.